

## Let us learn from the past and build a New Ireland

By Dónall Ó Ceallaigh



As we approach Easter 2017 and the 101st anniversary of the Easter Rising of 1916 are we anywhere near the ideals set out in the proclamation read out by Pádraig Pearse outside the GPO? NO, most definitely not.

It is apparent now more than ever that a new governmental system and structures are need to replace the two failed systems we are currently living under now in what is Ireland 2017. The 26 county Free State and the British ruled 6 occupied counties of the

northeast have pursued and implemented austerity measures against communities across the whole country. Ireland 2017 is facing the worst homelessness crisis in the history of the state. Record numbers of people have nowhere to call home and shockingly that number is growing. In recent news it was reported that the number of people in emergency accommodation have reached a new record high of 7,421 last month according to official figures. That is an increase from 7,167 in January. Children experiencing homelessness has risen from 2,407 to 2,546. This is an increase of 3.5% between January and February alone.

The figures do not represent the overall number of homeless people as many are not included such as people 'sofa surfing', a term giving to people saying with friends. Victims of domestic violence staying in refuges among others are just some of the 'hidden homeless' adding to the crisis.

The Free State administrations use of Shannon Airport to facilitate the American military is also a major concern and a direct contradiction of our neutrality and such activity should cease immediately.

News reports this week have revealed that Fine Gael and Fianna Fail have made a pact to install more than 300 extra water meters in apartment blocks across the country. This return to the water metering program, which had seen widespread resistance of the installations in communities countrywide in recent years, so much so that the program had been halted, is just another example of austerity measures been pursued by the government.

### What is the alternative?

The alternative is to put real power into the hand of the people starting at local community level. Taken power from the elected representatives in the current system, who we see time and time again use that power to their own ends. Election time is the only time that these Leinster House representatives are seen in the local community when they promise the 'sun and the stars' to secure a vote for themselves.

In a New Ireland (Éire Nua) we would see a four province federal Ireland with a self-governing parliament in each province which would provide the people with the best chance of been involved and shaping their own destiny. This level of participatory democracy can be achieved at local level starting with VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY COUNCILS with the right of audience at all district council meetings.

## Republican sinn féin poblachtach

**DISTRICT COUNCILS** would serve the needs of the communities and would have charge of public services to individuals and families in the sphere of social welfare, education, labour guidance, trading, employment, housing, planning permission, agriculture and fishing, small industry etc.

**REGIONAL COUNCILS** who would concern themselves with (a) public services e.g. hospitals, major roads, telecommunications and third level education (b) economic, physical and educational planning.

**PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES** who would allocate funds to the Regional Councils and co-ordinate regional plans.

Lastly the **NATIONAL PARLIAMENT** which would be placed in the geographic centre of Ireland in Athlone and would deal with Foreign Affairs and Defence.

The federal model would be fair to all sections of the country given everybody a equal say in their future affairs.

***ENDS***

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